

Record Reviews

Bob Nirkind

1972

CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE Stone the Crows (Polydor PD-5037)

By all that's just and good, Polydor's release of *CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE* by Stone the Crows should have been cause for rejoicing. After all, wasn't this the album figured to vault the band right up there on top with its fellow British hitmakers? That's the way things were supposed to be at any rate, before lead guitarist and Crows cofounder Leslie Harvey died tragically, electrocuted onstage, last Spring. With that in mind, the record assumes a more bittersweet nature.

Musically, Stone the Crows is at its peak, a gutsier, maturer group than it's ever been. With Harvey's mellow guitar work leading the band on five of the LP's seven tracks (ex-Thunderclap Newman guitarist Jimmy McCullough playing lead on the other two) and Maggie Bell belting out the song lyrics with a drive and intensity that puts other female vocalists to shame, the Crows have finally put together an album whose output is worthy of all the praise and adulation the band's received over the past couple years by its many British admirers.

An album with few, if any, dull moments, *CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE* comes as close to the Crows stage show as a studio recording possibly could, an amiable mixture of rock, blues and soul provided to win over even the most stubborn listener.

Well balanced, the record opens with a fiery rocker ("On the Highway"), followed by a slow-paced soul number ("One More Chance"), a classic Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee 12 bar blues ("Penicillen Blues") and a short instrumental ("King Tut"). Flipping over to the second side, the band builds a solid foundation for Maggie's soulful rendering of "Goodtime Girl" before getting into the album's strongest selection and concert favorite, "Niagara," Leslie Harvey's beautiful guitar solo a lasting memory of his great ability. Fittingly, the Crows close with "Sunset Cowboy", a soft and touching band tribute to its' lost leader.

Give *CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE* a listen. Stone the Crows may not be your cup 'o tea, but then again they just might be if you give 'em half a chance.

GLITTER Gary Glitter (Bell—1108)

Gary Glitter. I'll admit to being turned off to this guy as soon as I heard his name, but not half as much as I was once I heard his big chart-busting single, "Rock and Roll Part II." As if that wasn't bad enough, our man had the guts to scrape together eleven more tunes (six originals) and come up with an album entitled *GLITTER* (imaginative, isn't it?). Now, in retrospect, the single looks good in comparison.

An abominable album from first cut to last, *GLITTER* has absolutely nothing to recommend it. The echo chamber vocals are godawful dull, the backup band even duller and the songs are a total waste of good wax. Glitter not only butchers his own material, but rock and roll classics like "Donna" and "The Wanderer" as well.

Cashing in on both the glitter and high fashion craze in music (a la Marc Bolan and Rod Stewart) and the current rock and roll revival, this guy Glitter and his management have been able to make a bundle out of nothing. Whatever you do, don't help them feed the fire. Like any other shooting star, it's a sure bet Gary Glitter will fall from sight just as quickly as he entered.

FLASH IN THE CAN Flash (Sovereign SMAS—11115)

For a young band, England's Flash has done all right for itself. Formed less than a year ago and exposed to the American record-buying, concert-going public for little more than six months, the group has capitalized on a catchy hit single, "Small Beginnings," and Peter Banks' reputation as former guitarist for Yes to become an overnight "heavy" within the music business. It's only too bad Flash hasn't the talent to go with its' success.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying Flash is talentless. Far from it. Peter Banks especially is a fine, gifted musician. What Flash lacks, though, is an internal strength. Aside from "Small Beginnings," nothing this band's recorded has had any lasting appeal. In other words, there's no one in the group capable of composing good melodic material with any degree of consistency. Flash's new album, FLASH IN THE CAN, says all that and then some.

What this group will eventually have to learn, as did widely promoted/little appreciated Warner Brothers "supergroup" Captain Beyond, is that it takes a lot more than lengthy, up-tempo numbers with frequent key changes and fancy electronic gimmickry to make a successful band. Until then, Flash will still be nothing more than a bunch of second-rate rockers searching for that pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

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